

Editorial

A Warm Farewell

A dozen years ago, not long after the founding of the Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP), leaders of the organization recognized the need for a dedicated journal for the society. They sought a place in print that we molecular diagnosticians could call our own and where we could publish advances in a field that bridged basic science and clinical diagnostics. The initial goals were simple: to give equal value to new technology and new discoveries, to provide careful validation and comparison of clinical assays, and to promote our growing expertise, as well as that of this fledgling organization, AMP. These leaders also saw the value in partnering with a larger, established professional group that could aid us in quickly reaching beyond the borders of molecular pathology to a broader range of pathology and medical professionals. Thus, in 1999, *The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics* was launched (originally as *The American Journal of Pathology, Part B*), in collaboration with the American Society for Investigative Pathology. It has been a tremendous honor to spend 11 years serving in a leadership role for the *JMD*, and this issue will sadly be my last as Editor-in-Chief. It is my belief that the *JMD* has fulfilled those early goals, and my greatest desire is that it will continue to thrive well into the future.

It has been exciting and rewarding to watch the Journal grow, along with AMP itself. Early on, AMP meetings served as a focal point for bringing together those few of us practicing molecular diagnostics (Who else could relate to the highs and lows of defining quality control and assay reproducibility when dealing with radiolabeled probes?). Over the years, the field has become much more sophisticated in its technology, clinical applications, and assay standardization, and the articles published within the *JMD* reflect this evolution. AMP has also become active nationally and internationally, addressing a variety of regulatory, educational, and other issues, and in parallel, the *JMD* has seen an increasing number of position papers from the society and other professional groups addressing many of the same issues of importance to our colleagues and trainees (see the Special Report on competency-based education in this issue). We are also at the point where an increasing number of submitted manuscripts no longer fit squarely into the traditional subdivisions of our society (Solid Tumors, Hematopathology, Genetics, and Infectious Disease) but instead fall into new areas, which will require ongoing evolution on the part of the *JMD*. Molecular

diagnostics has grown in amazing and unanticipated directions and will continue to do so in the years to come, as will the *JMD*.

I am very proud to see the progress that has been made by the *JMD*. Submissions have risen again this past year, and the quality of papers continues to go up. We have successfully moved from a quarterly to bi-monthly publication, without a drop in quality or number of articles per issue. We continue to attract an increasing number of timely Reviews, as well as Commentaries on key articles, published within each issue. And perhaps the most quantitative, and scrutinized, measure of our success, the impact factor, has risen to an outstanding 3.643 (2008 JCR). The *JMD* has clearly established itself as the premier journal in the field of molecular diagnostics. Again, changes lie ahead, as we anticipate the revolution in scientific publishing that is coming: electronic and publish-ahead-of-print article delivery are just the beginning—I expect to have *JMD* content available instantaneously in my pocket in the not-so-distant future. Despite the many differences the future will bring to scientific publishing, the central purpose will remain unchanged: journals have a responsibility to provide efficient, unbiased peer review of scientific work, to relay top-quality, novel results to readers as quickly as possible, and to share useful information to advance the field as a whole.

Thinking back, I am amazed by the responsibility and trust bestowed on me—by the Joint Journal Oversight Committee, the two societies, and their members, and by the innumerable authors who have entrusted our editorial team of Associate Editors and Editorial Board members with the task of evaluating their hard work. I hope we have handled each manuscript as we would our own, with fairness and a great deal of personal attention. We have strived to be open and unbiased, while maintaining and even raising the quality of published manuscripts. Occasionally issues did arise, and I hope that we handled these fairly and kindly—it is not easy to deliver negative news to one's respected colleagues. But this difficult job was made easier by the professionalism and grace shown by authors with whom we worked. The past years have been extremely gratifying, and I have learned and grown far more in knowledge and experience than I had ever imagined. While the *JMD* was envisioned to be a benefit to AMP, its members, and practitioners of molec-

ular diagnostics worldwide, I truly feel as though the primary beneficiary has been me.

As I say goodbye to my editorial responsibilities, my deepest thanks go out to all who have worked with me during my tenure. In particular, Nelson Fausto, who served as the first *JMD* Editor-in-Chief, guided me as I learned the ropes of editorial leadership as Senior Associate Editor. I thank the many Associate Editors who toiled tirelessly with me to oversee the review process and assist in manuscript decision making. I am also grateful to the three Managing Editors who have directed the *JMD* through its evolution: Priscilla Markwood, Maria Giorla, and Audra Cox. Finally, I am very appreciative of

the leadership of the two societies for allowing me the editorial freedom to take the *JMD* in exciting directions.

It is now time for a new leader to steer the direction of the *JMD*. So I extend my most enthusiastic wishes to Timothy O'Leary in his endeavors with the *JMD*; his leadership skills and strong molecular background make him an excellent choice to pilot the *JMD* into the future—a future that is very bright indeed. And although I will no longer be behind the helm, I will still read it cover to cover for years to come!

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Editor-in-Chief